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ABSTRACT

The 14 chapters of this book review and synthesize research on the influence of college on students. Chapter 1 provides a detailed discussion of the evolution of research on college outcomes as an area of study, outlines the conceptual framework that guided the review, and provides a general overview of the study. Chapter 2 summarizes the major theoretical models of college effects on student change. Chapters 3 and 4 address the influence of college on learning and cognitive development including the development of generalizable intellectual skills and analytical competencies. Chapters 5 through 8 deal with the influence of college on various dimensions of personal growth and change, including aspects of students' relational systems, their self-systems, their cultural, intellectual, educational, occupational, political, social, religious values and activities, and their gender role orientations. Chapters 9 through 11 deal with the influence of college on the socioeconomic attainment process, primarily for educational, occupational and economic attainments. Chapter 12 synthesizes what is known about the long-term impact of college on the quality of life, including such factors as subjective well-being, marriage, family planning, consumer activities, savings and investment behavior, and leisure. Chapter 13 summarizes the total body of evidence pertaining to what is known about the impact of college. Finally, Chapter 14 discusses implications of the evidence for institutional practice and public policy, specifically for academic and student affairs policy formation, and state and federal policy. A technical appendix addresses in detail some of the major methodological and analytical issues in assessing the influence of college on students. Includes approximately 3,000 references. (LPT)

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